



NCA Accredited

November 2009

1401 Woodland, Portage, MI 49024

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The staff and parents at Woodland school work cooperatively to develop the whole child in an atmosphere of respect and dignity



PRINCIPAL'S CORNER

Greetings Families!

The leaves are just about off of the trees, MEAPs are completed and the holidays are coming up quickly. Such is busy November. There are many things to look forward to such as parent-teacher conferences, and various classroom celebrations. As the weather gets colder, please remember to send your child to school with the necessary outer clothing and boots to keep him/her comfortable in the outside elements. We do go outside unless the wind chill is below 0. If you need assistance with providing winter clothing, please let us know. Following are a few happenings and articles of interest. Have a wonderful month.

Sue O'Donnell



WALK FOR WOODLAND

The Walk for Woodland was a HUGE success! We raised over \$7000. The students were able to dye Mrs. O'Donnell's hair pink!

Many thanks to Kellie Garcia and the PTO for organizing this event; all who donated; and especially our students who gave it their all to help Woodland!

2009-10 REPORT CARD SEND HOME DATES

Report cards will be sent home with students on the following dates:

1st Quarter: Monday, November 16th

2nd Quarter: Friday, February 12th

3rd Quarter: Friday, April 30th

4th Quarter: Mailed out from the office on Friday, June 18th

REQUEST TO STAY INDOORS FOR RECESS

We believe that except on rare occasions, if a child is well enough to be in school they are well enough to go outside and enjoy recess. In addition, an adult must always be present to supervise a child staying in for recess, which takes away from staff lunch times and office staff duties. Therefore, a note from a physician stating the child is to remain indoors for recess is required for a child to be individually supervised during recess time. Thank you for understanding and cooperation with this matter.

PICTURE RETAKE DAY TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 10TH

Picture retakes will occur on Tuesday, Nov. 10th. Students who missed the initial picture day will have photos taken on this date. In addition, parents/guardians who are not pleased with the first photos of their child they received, should send the total picture packet back to school with their child on retake day and their child's photo will be retaken.

Students who have pictures taken on Retake Day will have their photo in class composites which will be delivered in January.

UPCOMING NO SCHOOL DAYS

- Friday, November 6th
No School Students - Teacher Record Day
- Wednesday, Thursday & Friday, November 25th, 26th & 27th
Thanksgiving Break – No School
- *Monday, November 30 – School Resumes*
- Winter Break – December 21st through January 1st

SNOW DAY NOTIFICATION

When Portage Schools cancels or delays the start of school, the announcement will be made in time to make the 6 a.m. news on local television and radio stations. Parents may also call our "School Closing Hotline" at 323-6800 or check the District web site at www.portageps.org and click on the "Parents & Visitors" link for the WWMT-TV Channel 3 school closing announcements (you will see the link on the upper right, under the weather forecast). Portage Cable Access Channel 20 also carries school closing announcements.

CELL PHONES, GAMEBOYS, IPODS, ETC

Students are not to bring cell phones, toys, Game Boys, iPods or other electronic devices to school. These can be expensive and the school can not be responsible for items lost. Toys and games brought from home also create controversy in regards to who may touch or play with the item. We have invested in new playground equipment, balls, sidewalk chalk, etc. and indoor recess games for all students to use and share. Except for special "show and tell" times approved by the teacher, students are not to bring toys or electronic devices to school.

LAST MINUTE MESSAGES

Please try to make any last minute arrangements for pick up and after-school plans in the morning before your children leave for school. The office is calling into classrooms in the late afternoon too often. These too frequent interruptions make it very difficult to teach.

With increased pressure on our teachers and students to achieve high academic standards, we

must be very protective of our instructional hours and make sure they are as productive as possible.

In an effort to provide the least disruptive learning environment for students and teachers, messages regarding changes in end of the day routines, after school information and/or other communication, will be given to students at 3:30 p.m. each school day. Office staff will not disrupt classes on a case by case basis, but instead will hold messages until 3:30 p.m.

Parents/guardians are reminded to contact the school office with information that needs to be given to students prior to 3:30 p.m. *Attempts to exchange information with students after this time can result in confusion, mistakes and possible unsafe situations for all involved – students, teachers, bus drivers and parents.*

We ask that parents/guardians take time to review student after school plans with children prior to departure to school and to avoid calling the school office with reminders or changes in routines unless it is an emergency.

BIRTHDAY INVITES & DELIVERIES

*The staff of Woodland Elementary School requests that students **NOT** hand-out party invitations at school.* Disappointment students may feel about not being invited to a party, causes a disruption to the educational environment. Invitations to parties should be made outside of the school environment.

*We also request deliveries of flowers or balloons **NOT** be made at school.* These deliveries to students often turn into a distraction to the learning process. Consequently, balloons and flowers will not be delivered to classrooms and will remain in the office until the end of the school day for the student to pick up.

WEAPON FREE SCHOOL ZONE

All parents/guardians should be fully aware and review district policy 5360, Weapon Free School Zone, listed on page 17 of the Elementary Handbook. The policy states, “the Board shall permanently expel a student from attending school in the District, if the student possesses a weapon in a weapon free school zone or commits arson in a District building or on District grounds.” Weapons include a firearm, gun, revolver, pistol, dagger, stiletto, knife, pocketknife, iron bar or brass knuckles.

MEDIA COVERAGE/STUDENT IMAGES IN PUBLICATIONS

From time to time we will invite local media (newspaper and television) in our school to cover events and activities. This is done in an effort to make the public aware of the outstanding learning and positive activities that occur at Woodland. We will also be adding photos of students at work and play to our Woodland website. Please know Portage Public School is very sensitive to pupil privacy and strictly monitors all situations in which any student images are used in publications. In addition, students' images will not be identified on any of the school district websites

VOLUNTEERS: BACKGROUND CHECKS, BADGES AND CONFIDENTIALITY

- All volunteers working directly with children must have a criminal background check. Forms for this to occur are available from Donna Alexander in the office. This background check must be done annually for any regular volunteer working directly with children.
- All volunteers should also have a “Volunteer Badge” made for them to pick up in the office each time they work in the school. A form is available in the office for volunteers to complete to have the badge made with their name. Please complete this form in the office, if you are a volunteer without a name badge.

- Volunteers are also reminded that information regarding student behavior or progress observed while volunteering in our school is confidential and should not be shared with outside individuals. Just as you wouldn't want parents discussing your student's behaviors or academics with others, they don't want you discussing theirs.
- Please be assured Woodland teachers are well aware of the needs of the many students in their classrooms. Due to strict confidentiality rules and regulations, teachers are not able to discuss specific interventions that are in place for a child and/or a child's ability/disability with volunteers.

*Volunteers are greatly appreciated and a valuable resource to the Woodland Elementary School community! Your assistance is greatly appreciated by both students and staff!
Thank you for being willing to so generously give of your time!*

WHO CAN STUDENT INFORMATION BE SHARED WITH?

The confidentiality of student information is of high importance at Woodland Elementary School. All schools across the country are mandated to follow the guidelines of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Outlined below is a quick review of information parents/guardians should know regarding FERPA rules and regulations.

- ★ School districts must give full rights with regard to pupil records to either parent unless there is a court order or other legally binding document relating to custody that specifically revokes these rights.
- ★ A parent who does not have physical custody will be assumed to have retained legal custody unless a court order is provided to the school showing that legal custody has been revoked.
- ★ A parent with legal custody maintains a right to meet with and discuss student progress with school staff.

★A stepparent or grandparent has no legal independent rights to student records unless the stepparent or grandparent is the legal guardian. ***Teachers will not be able to share verbally or in writing student progress information with a stepparent or grandparent unless a release of information is signed annually and placed in the student's records.***

★A parent with legal custody may release student records to a stepparent via a release of information form. This allows school staff to have direct contact with the stepparent regarding student progress.

★ A parent/guardian with legal custody must sign a release of information for any school staff member to complete forms regarding or to discuss student progress with any outside agency. ***Teachers will not be able to share information regarding student progress with tutors, counselors, doctors, etc. unless a release of information is signed annually and placed in the student's records.***

Parent's Guide for Helping Children Succeed in School

From: loveandlogic.com

✓Love and Logic parents remember that parents can't teach for teachers and teachers can't parent for parents. Remember that teachers and parents can't learn for kids no matter how much we love them.

✓Show the same amount of love for your children regardless of their success in school. Show sadness rather than anger when they have trouble at school.

✓Expect your children to do their share of the chores at home.

✓Spend some time each day talking with excitement about your work and your day. They will want to imitate you and will soon begin to talk about school and their day with excitement.

✓Take turns reading to each other every day.

✓Have your children teach you something they have learned at school. Do this once per week.

✓Encourage your children to do things that "charge their batteries." Encourage them to try many different activities as a way of discovering interests and talents. Remind them that they will build their careers around their talents, not around their weaknesses.

✓Provide a time and place for homework. Expect that they will study. Allow them to study either by writing the assignments or thinking hard about them for a reasonable amount of time.

✓Support the teacher: Don't fight with children over the homework. Don't fight with the teachers over the grade or consequence. Tell your children that you will love them regardless of their grades or the number of years it takes to complete each grade.

✓Don't pay your children for good grades and don't punish for bad grades. Be excited about the good grades and sad for the children about their bad grades.

✓Have your children bring home papers. Look at the right answers instead of the wrong ones. Don't correct the wrong answers—leave this for the teacher.

✓Expect this Love and Logic program to take about one year before you see good results. Remember that children who have a hard time at school need to get away from it for a while each day. More homework and problems at home about school won't help. Don't complain to teachers that they should give this child more homework. Use this program instead and you will see amazing results in one year. Fight with your children and their teachers about homework and the problem will still be there in years to come.



Attention Schools & Parents

Coming Soon NEW Chickenpox (Varicella) and Adolescent Immunization REQUIREMENTS For School Programs

BEGINNING JANUARY 1, 2010, pending approval
and effective for November 2010 report period

Required for all children entering kindergarten and all children changing school districts:

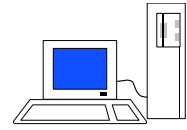
- Two doses of varicella (Var) or history of chickenpox disease

Required for all children enrolled in 6th grade and for all children 7 through 18 years changing school districts:

- One dose of meningococcal conjugate vaccine (MCV4) on or after the 11th birthday
- One dose of tetanus/diphtheria/acellular pertussis (Tdap) on or after the 11th birthday if 5 years since last dose of tetanus/diphtheria vaccine (DTaP, Td, DT)
- Two doses of varicella (Var) or history of chickenpox disease



Media Center News



Volume 16 Number 4

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IMPORTANT - Please have a **special place** for **books** from the **Media Center** to be stored at home. That way the books are easy to find when it is time to return them.



The **Media Center** along with **Mrs Kounelis's** class came up with suggestions to do well on the recently given MEAP test. The students came up with ideas and had these posted together with their picture.

Fifth graders were busy trying to solve the mystery of the Gnome Skull treasure. After finding a missing scroll, Mr. Lauritsen shared the contents and the first clue with the students in each fifth grade class. Students were solving the clues that were hidden in the Media Center and lead to a treasure chest. This exercise helped fifth graders learn keyword searching skills.

I invite you to stop in and see the Media Center during your conference visit. I will be available to answer any questions you may have, or just to say hello.

Keep those printer ink cartridges and cell phones coming in! We take all kinds and recycle them back for another use.

The **November Book Fair** is coming and is scheduled for the week **November 9th thru the 13th**. Parent night will be November 11th from 6:00 until 8:00. This is a great time to pick up holiday gift items and books for fall reading. Books also make durable gifts all year long. We hope to see you there! The Book Fair is the only fund raiser the Media Center will have this year. We will be using funds that are raised to buy replacement books for those that are worn out and new books as the Media Center book budget was cut to save the district money.



Second graders are finishing our study of bats and will soon start on the next topic which is flight and the Wright brothers. We have shared books and tales of bats and have completed a number of activities. Bats are no longer an unknown scary or disgusting creature to our 2nd graders!

The Challenge Chair is open and has Sudoku puzzles for students to solve and other puzzles to work on.



Enjoy a great fall!

